

# **Period Poverty Awareness Campaign**

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## I. Executive Summary

This report is on the Period Poverty Awareness Campaign carried out by the Office of State Representative Barbara Hernandez. It consisted of three events, including the Period Product Drop-Off Event, Distribution Event, and Menstrua Bill Town Hall Event. My role in this campaign was to design the graphics needed to promote our events, reach out to constituents via phone call, and pack products to hand out to residents in need.

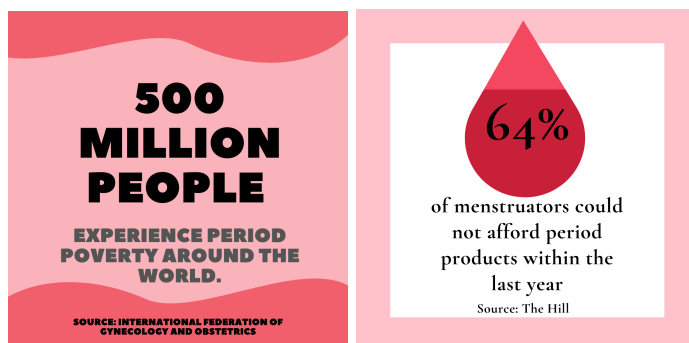
## II. Business Context

The Office of the State Representative Barbara Hernandez is a state level governmental office. It focuses on providing help to its constituents in the 83<sup>rd</sup> District of Illinois. Representative Barbara Hernandez is also in charge of representing the 83<sup>rd</sup> District in Springfield, where she proposes bills and resolutions that act for the people living in the district.

## III. Business Project Description

The business phenomena I worked on was on the Period Poverty Awareness Campaign. This campaign was intended to educate constituents about the pervading issue of period poverty, which is something that occurs when someone is not able to afford the basic necessities of menstrual hygiene. Although this sounds like an issue that happens in third-world countries, it is something that can impact even the residents of the 83rd district. This campaign, through multiple events like the Period Product Drive, Distribution Event, and Menstrual Bill Town Hall, will educate constituents on the importance of these issues.

To execute this particular campaign, I was involved in a few different aspects. Firstly, I designed, using Canva, many of the graphics needed to promote the events we were planning. For example, to get constituents to understand the circumstances of period poverty, I made social media posts with shocking statistics to grab their attention.



Similarly, I made flyers for the events we were hosting. One event was the Menstrual Bill Town Hall, where Rep. Hernandez and other legislators had a Facebook Live to explain the different bills they were proposing regarding menstruators.





In addition to the graphic designing, I also helped in the packing process for the Period Product Distribution Event. After getting the donations from constituents, we packed the products into small goodie bags that we would distribute.

Lastly, I called constituents over the phone to inform them about our upcoming events and spread the word for those who may not look at the website or social media.

#### **IV. Business Project Research**

**Question 1:** How are period products being distributed to low-income menstruators if they are not being provided through food stamps or other government programs?

Prior to Representative Hernandez's HB155, there was not a means for low income menstruators to get their supplies. However, I learned that after the passage of HB155, these people can purchase the products they need using SNAP and WIC benefits instead of having to choose between food and period products. To find more information, I used the Illinois General Assembly Website and asked questions with the other people in the office regarding HB155.

**Question 2:** What are other states doing regarding menstrual equity and period poverty that Illinois has not done yet? How successful was it?

Maryland HB711 is a bill that will deduct up to \$1000 off from income taxes if someone donates menstrual hygiene products to reputable organizations. This bill was passed on May 18th of this year, according to the official website of Maryland's General Assembly. Due to its relative recency, its impacts are yet to be analyzed.

My research methods for both of these questions were by reading the official websites for each respective state's general assembly because that's where the text for the official bills are.

My insights from these questions were that there are a lot of different ways we can tackle period poverty. For instance, we can put free products in all levels of education, from 4th grade to college, we can ensure that products are being offered in governmental programs for the financially struggling menstruators, and we can give initiatives for others to help these menstruators receive the products they need by deducting income taxes. What I had thought was

a one-way approach came to reveal multiple perspectives of looking at the same issue, all to achieve the same goal.

The major limitation for the Period Poverty Awareness Campaign was due to Covid-19, and many of our events could have been larger to include more people at in-person events. However, the current health concerns have made it difficult to reach a larger, more connected group of people. In addition, the issue of menstrual equity is still heavily stigmatized in society today, and is not yet deemed a natural occurrence. Some menstruators may not feel comfortable publicly discussing them, either. As a result, this may have been a limiting factor in executing our events to include as many people as possible and giving them a safe space. All in all, I think that given the environment, the Period Poverty Campaign was carried out rather successfully.

## **V. Business Project Key Learnings & Recommendations**

One of the main things I learned through the Period Poverty Awareness Campaign is the organization needed to successfully execute an event. I learned how much outreach was required, especially because our drop-off event needed partners (Mutual Ground and Open Door Health Center). I can apply this new knowledge to my leadership in extracurriculars at school.

I was also able to learn about the core issue of period poverty. Although I thought I had quite a bit of information regarding menstrual inequity and period poverty, it turns out that I still had a plethora of information to learn about. For instance, I did not know that some states taxed menstrual products because it wasn't considered a necessity. Or, places like homeless shelters and programs for low-income families do not cover menstrual hygiene products. I had definitely assumed that menstrual hygiene products would be covered through governmental programs, but until Rep. Hernandez proposed that in one of her menstrual hygiene bills, that was not the case in Illinois.

As for recommendations, I don't have many. My main complaint has to do with the fact that due to Covid-19, my experiences over the summer were heavily limited. It definitely would have been more engaging and fun to be able to see what the legislative process looked like up close, and see more of the politics aspect. Of course, this isn't something the business mentor can fix, so I understand that my roles were limited this summer. That being said, I am hoping that for the future, the interns can do more hands-on work. Furthermore, one recommendation I have is more specific to the work I did for the Period Poverty Campaign; I personally found that calling constituents didn't seem as effective. Many people hung up because they thought I was a scam (which I can understand since I don't pick up calls from unknown numbers either. In general, I'm not sure if calling got the message across. I don't know what method could be used instead, but I do feel that calling isn't an amazing method.

## **VI. Annotated Bibliography**

[Illinois General Assembly: HB155](#)

[Maryland General Assembly: HB711](#)

## VII. Appendix

Not Applicable

Infographic:

